

# FLIGHT JACKET

Vol. 8, No. 22

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

June 2, 2006



New course modernizes  
Marines' training  
**Page 4**



LAR ensures security  
for areas around Fallujah  
**Page 6**



Marine one step closer  
to 'final frontier'  
**Page 8**



Sea Stallions implement  
new weapon  
**Page 10**

<b>Guidance.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Briefs.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>News.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Feature.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Announcements.....</b>	<b>11</b>

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The Naval Medical Center San Diego Color Guard presents the colors May 29, Memorial Day at the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial. The celebration included guest speakers and music from the Navy Band Southwest.

## Veterans honored at Mount Soledad

Story and Photos by  
**Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat**  
*MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent*

"The land of the free" is a phrase that describes the great country that we live in. Some people do not realize just how free America really is.

The U.S. military has fought in many wars to preserve the beliefs America stands for. Many service members have made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their life for their country. Memorial Day honors such men and women, and is celebrated throughout the country.

The Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in La Jolla, Calif., was the site of a celebration in honor of those who have fallen protecting our great country. The theme this year was, "Service to America."

The memorial has more than 1,700 black granite plaques. Each tell the story of a veteran's military career. An enormous cross as well as a large American flag, stands atop the memorial, in respect to the living and deceased service members.

The memorial at Mt. Soledad was originally dedicated as a Korean War Memorial. However, it now honors veterans from all wars and conflicts.

The ceremony kicked off in the after-

noon with music by the Navy Band Southwest, directed by Lt. Cmdr. Dale Yager.

"It is an honor to play here today," said Yager. "It is not the first time we have played at this monument; we played here in November for the Veterans Day ceremony."

The Navy band played patriotic songs before the ceremony, to try and set the mood for a solemn service.

Rear Adm. Joseph Maguire, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, was the "Service to America" keynote speaker.

"Today we honor those who gave their lives to our country," said Maguire. "Some need no effort at all to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice."

As a nation at war, sometimes we forget to thank our troops for their service.

We are a nation at war this memorial day. For more than four years we have been at war on terrorism, which is longer than we fought in WW II, said Maguire.

Maguire went on to speak about a Navy SEAL team, which lost three of their four members during a patrol in June 2005. The team itself was reported missing June 28.

These SEAL's were patrolling deep in the Himalayas' when they encountered a large enemy force. The injured Lt. Michael



A wall of plaques at the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego features photos and short stories about several service members who previously served, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

P. Murphy exposed himself to enemy fire to radio for help.

A team of SEAL's and Army Special Forces were sent to rescue them; however the transport Chinook was shot down by a rocket propelled grenade, killing the 16 troops aboard.

As Maguire finished his speech, the echo of taps sounded through the calm air during a moment of silence.

The ceremony concluded with the Navy band playing "God Bless America," and the voices of hundreds of people, singing "God bless America, the land that I love."



## FLIGHT JACKET



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Commanding General  
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



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Commanding Officer  
MCAS Miramar

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# DoD to help reduce military suicides

## USMC Press Release

HQMC

WASHINGTON — Suicide rates within the military are about half those in the general military-aged population, but the Department of Defense is reaching out to its members to help further reduce the incidence of suicide within the ranks, a top military doctor said.

The suicide rate for military members during 2005 was 11 per 100,000, said Dr. David Tornberg, deputy assistant secretary of defense for clinical and program policy.

That compares to about 19.5 per 100,000, the national average for Americans in the 20 to 44 year age group. Experts say this rate may actually be 40 or 50 percent higher than reported, said Tornberg.

“We have substantially fewer suicides in the services,” he said. Yet in-depth investigations into every military death and extensive publicity associated with military suicides often give the American public the opposite impression, he acknowledged.

In fact, the suicide rate within the military has remained “remarkably steady” over the past decade, through peacetime and war, Tornberg said.

And while there’s no indication that combat deployments increase the likeli-

hood of suicide, Tornberg said it’s clear that they add yet another stressor to the troops.

“There’s a precipitating reason for every suicide. And in general, it is a response to some life event that has dire consequences to the individual at the time,” Tornberg said. “During high-stress situations such as deployments, relationship, financial and other problems may worsen.”

Another contributing factor may be the ready availability of weapons.

DoD has long recognized military service as a high-stress occupation, and offers a full array of programs to help service members cope with that stress. “Ours is high-stress work, and we recognize that and have really robust programs in place for addressing this issue,” Tornberg said. “The way we see it, one single loss of life is a problem.”

The key is making mental health services more available, removing the stigma often associated with seeking care, and teaching troops to recognize when they or a fellow service member may need help.

Each of the services has its own suicide prevention program tailored to its force. But despite subtle differences, all the programs make mental health support and suicide prevention available to service members before, during and after deployment.

Medical screenings that include mental

health factors, given before and after deployments, help identify people in distress. During deployments, mental health teams and chaplains provide support. Unit leaders are trained to recognize telltale signs and steer their troops to the services they need.

Service members often form the first line of defense, looking out for each other. When they're concerned that a buddy's in trouble, Tornberg advises the direct approach. “If you see someone undergoing difficulties in this area, ask them if they are considering taking their life and encourage them to seek counseling and assistance,” he said.

If that doesn't work, Tornberg urges people to go to their unit leaders, chaplains or mental health professionals with their concerns. “If there's a concern about suicide, we encourage them not to keep that confidential until after the fact,” he said.

Much of DoD's suicide-prevention effort is directed at educating service members to recognize when they need help and where to go to get it. “We strive to train our service members about risk factors for suicide and the warning signs and to encourage them to seek help if they're in a stressful situation,” Tornberg said.

Troops returning from deployments go

# Cough syrup, a waste of money?

## Story by Lt. Aaron D. Stavinoha

This January the American College of Chest Physicians informed the medical community that over-the-counter cough suppressants do not work. Billions of dollars are spent every year on over-the-counter cough syrups, cough drops, and cough medications. These syrups promise the consumer a speedy, non-drowsy cough relief. Regardless of this promise the American Thoracic Society, and the Canadian Thoracic Society all agree and report that new studies show these cough syrups and cough medications do absolutely nothing.

Most over-the-counter cough syrups contain the active ingredient dextromethorphan and the expectorant guaifenesin. Products that contain just the first ingredient, dextromethorphan, include Robitussin Maximum Strength Cough Suppressant, Vicks 44 Cough Relief, Benylin Adult Formula Cough Suppressant, and Sucrets 8 Hour Cough Suppressant. There are an additional 150 other syrups that use this “anti-cough” ingredient alone or in combination with other drugs.

The leading experts say that not only are these drugs ineffective, but they can also lead patients to delay seeking treatment for more serious coughs. Dr. Richard Irwin, reports that coughing is the number one reason why patients seek medical attention. The occa-

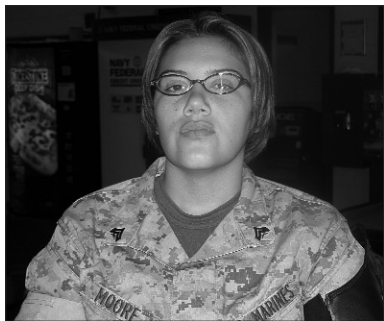
sional cough is normal, however excessive coughing or coughing that produces blood or discolored mucus is not normal and needs immediate evaluation. In addition, coughs that linger for more than 3 weeks, or are accompanied by shortness of breath, could be an indication of a more serious condition such as pneumonia.

So what do the leading experts in this field suggest for the occasional, nagging cough? They are recommending older antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), brompheniramine (Dimetapp), and chlorpheniramine, along with a decongestant such as pseudoephedrine (Sudafed). Unfortunately, these older antihistamines are often sedating. This sedating effect is what is actually helping reduce the cough. That is why the newer non-sedating antihistamines are not effective. Dr. Irwin is also suggesting the anti-inflammatory pain reliever naproxen (Aleve). Studies are indicating this drug has been effective for cold-related coughs.

So, before you dump \$8 on cough syrup and \$6 on cough drops that will probably not help at all, first try an antihistamine/decongestant. Keep in mind that coughs due to the common cold usually last less than 3 weeks.

And remember, the old faithful our moms nagged us to try, such as chicken soup and drinking lots of fluids, really do work to help relieve coughs.

# Miramarks



**Cpl. Brooke Moore**  
logistics and embarkation NCOIC  
VMFA-225

“Sergeant is the most important rank in the Corps because they are the ones who make it happen. They are always with the junior Marines to make sure the job gets done.”



**Lance Cpl. Andrew Mattmann**  
air traffic controller  
MCAS Miramar

*What is the most important rank in the Marine Corps and why?*

“Corporals and sergeants because they are people that all junior Marines should look up to.”



## Briefs

### 2006 Spring HRST Visit

The Headquarters Recruiter Screening Team will be holding a screening for recruiting duty June 22 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Staff non-commissioned Officers club.

Applicants must report in the service “C” uniform with service record book and health records.

For more information, contact your unit career retention specialist.

### Recruiters assistants needed

Earn extra promotion points by assisting recruiters in the Tennessee area.

Recruiters assistants are needed at Recruiting Station Nashville, Tenn., for the areas of Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville and Northern Alabama.

For more information call (615) 627-1526, Ext. 229

### CMC to Visit Marine Bases

Gen. Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, will address Marines in a series of events in the U.S. and abroad over the next several weeks. The purpose of his visits will be to reinforce the ideals, values and standards for Marines. The CMC’s remarks will focus on the value and meaning of honor, courage and commitment.

Dates for visits will be announced through commands.

### Prescribed Burns

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Fire Department will be conducting prescribed burns throughout the month of June in preparation of fire season. These fires eliminate hazardous fuels and will help reduce the wildfire risk.

### Illegal Drug Conference

On behalf of the Drug Demand Reduction Program and Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Marine Corps Community Services, a Methamphetamine Conference will be held June 29, from 8 a.m., to 4 p.m., in Building 8630.

For more information, call 577-4411.

### Miramar Career Fair

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Resource Center is holding a career fair June from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Building 8456, Room 103.

Vendors will include Lockheed Martin and various police departments from southern California.

For more information call 577-6710.

# Commissary awareness for Marines

Story and Photo by  
**Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin**

*MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent*

Some single Marines that live in the barracks may not shop at the commissary or know about the cheap, healthy foods that are available to them.

The Single Marine Program held a commissary awareness night May 25, to try and help these Marines realize the healthy choices and savings that are available to them.

“The whole point of this is to help Marines make smart choices at the commissary,” said Alisa Hertzler, director of the Single Marine Program. “Marines that live in the barracks usually eat fast food and that isn’t healthy.”

The SMP and staff from the Semper Fit Center displayed various healthy foods that were available at the commissary. These foods are a healthy alternative to some fatty foods.

“We wanted to display foods that Marines thought they would never buy,” said Ann Panatoni, health promoter, Semper Fit Center. “They tried them, and they were surprised that they enjoyed them.”

After the taste testing of the healthy foods the SMP set up a game they called “Barracks Iron Chef”. The Marines were given \$10 each and had unlimited time to purchase items in the commissary to make a dish a Marine would make in the barracks only using a microwave.

Marines are not allowed to keep any style of cooking device in their barracks room other than a microwave.

First place for the “Barracks Iron Chef” was Cpl. Julia R. Douglas, food service technician, Gonzales Hall, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Second place was Sgt. Shannon V. Winslow, food service technician, Gonzales Hall.

The night was not over after the “Barracks Iron Chef” game. The Marines and staff played another trivia game about the commissary. The game had basic knowledge about the commissary and its savings. If the team did not correctly answer the questions they would have to perform a physical challenge.



**Sgt. Carlos J. Moreira De La Cruz, food service technician, Gonzales Hall, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, prepares his dish May 25, for the “Barracks Iron Chef” challenge at the commissary. The game was designed for Marines to practice their skills in cooking cheap, healthy food in only a microwave.**

Some of the challenges included having a partner throw doughnuts into a barrel that a blindfolded Marine was holding. Another was for the two Marines on the team to put their face into a bowl of pudding searching for five carrot pieces.

“We wanted this game to be informational, but still a lot of fun,” said Cpl.

Brittany Siroki, air traffic controller, MCAS Miramar, and also the president of the SMP.

The commissary staff works with all other commissaries on Marine Corps installations to try and inform Marines of the healthy choices the commissary has. Programs like this awareness night are designed to benefit Marines.



# New course modernizes Marines' training

Story and Photos by

**Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.**

*MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent*

The Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 are pioneering new training to educate Marines on commercial wiring procedures for future deployments.

"In Operation Iraqi Freedom II, we were dealing with foreign wiring, and success was hit or miss," said Chief Warrant Officer Matias Delgadorodriguez, utilities platoon commander, MWSS-373, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "We hope this course will give the Marines more experience and confidence in Iraq."

"In Iraq, we are moving from smaller tactical generators and wiring to the more permanent generators and wiring similar to the commercial wiring in the U.S. The course is based on the national electric code of 2005 (as well as) international electric codes," said Delgadorodriguez.

Students are temporarily assigned to the course, which is OIF funded. The course is 20 working days long and starts with refreshing basic knowledge, theory of electricity, wiring skills, wiring size and electrical load capabilities.

The course combines classroom instruction and hands on learning. The instructor of the course, Kurt J. Eisenach, Electrical/Safety Training & Consulting Subcontractor, Kujo Engineering, was



**Lance Cpl. Clay A. Luna, electronic equipment repair specialist, Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, participates in his final test before completing the new electrician's course set up by Marine Wing Support Squadron 373. The course is designed to teach Marines how to properly install commercial wiring for their next deployment to Iraq.**

flown in from Minnesota to facilitate the training of the Marines.

"I really enjoy working with the Marines," said Eisenach, who is working with Marines for the first time. "I don't like being away from home for four weeks at a time, but these Marines will be in Iraq a lot longer than that, so I don't mind."

The course also includes a two-day section on how to use and maintain com-

mercial generators. The commercial generators have been modified to meet the needs of the Marine Corps' mission in Iraq.

"We've exceeded the capabilities of our tactical generators," said Delgadorodriguez. "The goal of the two day instruction is to be proficient and confident in operating and maintaining the new commercial generators."

New hand tools were purchased for MWSS-373 to make life a little easier for

the Marines. Learning how to use the new tools has been worked into the course.

"I am pretty happy with the tools," said Delgadorodriguez. "Having the proper tools for the job makes a huge difference, it makes the job easier."

To facilitate the training, the Marines at MWSS-373 built a structure inside one of their buildings. The structure has sections made out of wood, metal and brick. The structure was built with all of these sections to simulate all of the different materials that the Marines can expect to deal with in Iraq.

"The total cost of the structure was \$560," said Delgadorodriguez. "It was well worth it."

The original intent of the course was for wing Marines, but it opened up to utilities Marines from the west coast.

"We have many Marines from different wing squadrons," said Delgadorodriguez.

Because this is the first time the course has been run, it has been a learning experience.

"This (the course) was great," said Lance Cpl. Clay A. Luna, electronic equipment repair specialist, Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd MAW. "I got a refresher on things I had previously learned and I was taught the things I will need to know for Iraq."



**An electronic equipment repair specialist inspects his work moments before concluding the final test of the new electrician's course at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.**

# Barracks theft, a rising problem for Miramar

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines don't lie cheat or steal, a phrase drilled into all Marines' heads from boot camp on. It is no wonder some Marines and sailors may be shocked when they find their barracks rooms burglarized.

The Provost Marshal's Office does it's best to prevent and catch any potential thieves, but ultimately the responsibility of a Marine's belongings rests in their own hands.

"The one thing that hurts Marines the most is not securing their room when they leave," said Cpl. Jonathan Gerringer, dispatcher and patrolman, PMO, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

One of the main underlying problems is Marines assuming that their station or base is completely secure and everyone can be trusted.

"Marines assume that no one will steal from them if they leave their room for just a minute to go somewhere," said Gerringer. "It only takes a minute for someone to walk in their room with nothing and leave with their belongings."

Marines and sailors should be cautious when dealing with their personal belongings. The barracks should be treated the same as if this is their residence back home, locking the rooms when they leave and remaining vigilant for suspicious behavior around the barracks.

"Marines and sailors need to make sure they lock their doors and windows at all times," said Michael S. Faaborg, chief investigator, criminal investigation division, MCAS Miramar. "Maintaining key control is also an important part of retaining ones belongings."

If Marines or sailors have discrepancies with their wall lockers or door locks the situation should be brought to the barracks managers' attention immediately. The main purpose of the barracks manager is to ensure that the living conditions in and around the barracks are "good to go" at all times.

A great way to prevent motivated thieves from doing the unthinkable is to be on the look out for suspicious persons around the barracks. Visitors are also a concern with theft. Just because they may be the friend of a Marine or sailor, does not mean that they can be trusted.

"If you see anyone poking around rooms and windows or carrying items out of rooms, notify the duty or PMO immediately," said Gerringer. "As visitors are concerned, just because they are someone else's friend, doesn't mean they are your friend. All visitors should be logged in with the duty in case their information is needed."

If a Marine or sailor thinks he has become a victim of theft, he should double check his belongings to ensure it wasn't misplaced or lost by accident. Ensuring it is not a false report, the Marine or sailor should call PMO at 577-4059 to file a report. If the theft is of a great amount, CID will document the incident. It is also a good idea to contact the PMO lost and found at 577-6775 to log the item in as lost in case it turns up.

"If you call lost and found to report the item and it turns up we will notify you immediately," said Gerringer. "PMO's physical security/crime prevention has an engraver where Marines and sailors can bring their belonging for identification marks."

PMO takes theft very seriously. PMO has walking patrols through the barracks to deter thieves or any other criminal activity and PSCP conducts crime prevention surveys on all bachelor enlisted quarters buildings.

"We do this to give the unit tips on how they can better protect their Marines from theft," said Gerringer. "Unfortunately PMO cannot prevent all theft, in which case we rely on the help of all Marines and sailors residing on base to notify the duty of any criminal activity."

Most thefts take place over the weekend. This is the time when most Marines and sailors are away from their rooms and belongings are unattended. Most vehicle thefts



**The most common items stolen out of rooms are laptop computers, X-box and Playstation video game consoles and video games. Ensuring that all doors, windows and wall lockers are locked at all times is a good way to help prevent theft in the barracks among fellow Marines. Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam**

take place at night, when the light is low and no one is around.

"Even though the barracks parking lots are very well lit, many thefts still occur," said Gerringer.

In 2005, 116 larcenies were reported aboard MCAS Miramar. Only 6 of those identified as suspects were Marines. The most common items stolen out of rooms are laptop computers, video game consoles and video games.

"We all know article 121 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (Larceny), is punishable by Non Judicial Punishment," said Gerringer. "If you are caught you will be processed by PMO and your command. It is not worth it."



# LAR maintains security outside Fallujah



Cpl. Joseph E. Sherwood, a 29-year-old from Orlando Fla., assigned to Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, scans a berm for anything unusual during patrol. Working in direct support of 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, the Marines maintain security and stability in Gharmah, a farming town outside of Fallujah.

Story and Photos by  
Cpl. Graham A. Paulsgrove

*1st Marine Division*

GHARMAH, Iraq — They're fast, lethal and quickly working themselves out of a job.

Marines of Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, are clearing Gharmah - a small town north of Fallujah - of insurgents while training Iraqi soldiers to operate independently at the same time. They're doing it all with their light armored vehicles, an eight-wheeled vehicle they eat in, sleep in and use to maintain security and stability in their area of operations.

The company's main priority is keeping the roads through the town secure from insurgents and free of improvised explosive devices, according to 2nd Lt. Court Rape, a 23-year-old platoon commander.

"The main route in our AO has a lot of insurgent traffic running to Baghdad and Ramadi, transporting personnel and weapons, because it has fewer check-points," Rape said.

The Marines operate out of LAVs, a vehicle capable of traversing all types of terrain, while traveling at more than 70 mph. It's not just a speed-demon, though. It's brimming to the teeth with a pair of machine guns and a 25mm cannon. Top that off with infantry scouts in back - it's linchpin to the company's success. Locals see a sign of strength and speed, and insurgents see a rolling death threat.

"We can go everywhere a tank can go, but we have enough fuel to drive for a week," said Lance Cpl. Mark Efimoff, from Woodburn, Ore. "We are fast, mobile, have scouts on the ground and heavy fire power right there. LAVs are a quick, self sustaining force."

Company D's platoons leave their home base of Camp Fallujah for several days at a time, roaming their 60-square kilometer area, mainly covered by farmland, but dotted with a few villages.

They never really take a break either. Even when they're not running down the road, they're ready to fight, coiled in a 360-degree security perimeter while the Marines take turns sleeping and grabbing a bite to eat, according Efimoff.

In addition to keeping the roads safe,

the company - working in direct support of 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment - is conducting counterinsurgency operations, finding weapons caches, and working alongside the Iraqi Army.

"The Iraqi soldiers are a great asset," said Rape, from College Station, Texas. "Instead of our one interpreter, we have about 18 guys who can communicate with the Iraqi people, make their presence known and give us a heads up on insurgent activities."

The Iraqi Army is slated to take responsibility for select areas of Iraq starting at the end of this year and recently recruited more than 1,000 men from the Fallujah area. The close work with Iraqis is surprising even the harshest of Marine critics.

"I had my expectations of how they would perform before I saw them, but they came out and impressed us," said Sgt. Timothy Redleaf, a vehicle commander from Rapid City, S.D. "They are here to make a difference."

While the operations conducted with the Iraqis have not been on a large scale, they have shown promise in what they can offer.

"Our Marines will fight beside them without reservation in any conflict," said Capt. H. Ripley Rawlings IV, the company's commander, from Boulder, Colo. "If all of the Iraqi platoons are like the ones we have operated with, then the IA will be a force worthy of deploying with Marines. When the time is right, they will be ready to take over this province - and that time is approaching quickly."

After operating in the area for roughly two months, the Marines proved their capabilities as a fighting force. Insurgent attacks in the area are down from just a couple months ago.

Prior to their arrival just weeks ago, the region experienced insurgent attacks every day, including small-arms fire, IEDs, rocket attacks and ambushes. Now, it has ceased, according to Rawlings.

"Our enemy is very focused and determined, but ... we have degraded and defeated the enemy to the point where they stopped attacking us," said Rawlings. "The last few days have been very quiet."

"We are winning this war and Iraq's time as a free and sovereign democratic nation is just around the corner," he added.



Sgt. Joe L. Massey, a 26-year-old from Shelbyville, Ky., assigned to Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, checks on the Marines behind him during a daily patrol.





# Scholarship recipient steps closer to ‘lift off’

Story and Photo by  
**Staff Sgt. Maria C. Villanueva**  
*MCAS Miramar CPAO*

Progressing forward toward reaching his dream of exploring the “final frontier,” one Miramar Marine was one of two nation-wide recipients of a special scholarship May 19, for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom, at Mesa College in San Diego.

The Armed Forces Communications Educational Association awarded \$2,500 to Staff Sgt. Isaac Detrinidad, safety and hazardous materials staff noncommissioned officer in charge, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. The association notified him by mail that he was chosen for outstanding academic accomplishments and leadership potential.

Detrinidad held onto the letter until after midnight before finally opening it.

“(I thought about) all the time I put into my application, and this was a culmination point for me” said

Detrinidad. “I sat in my car for a long time. I couldn’t breathe until I read the first word (congratulations)!”

Detrinidad told the news to his two teenage sons, whom he raises on his own and said he was relieved.

“I shared the news with them first because it affects them as much as it does me,” said Detrinidad. “Single parenthood is overwhelming. Now I can focus on getting more things for the kids.”

Growing up the youngest of six children in a poverty-stricken environment, Detrinidad remains extremely involved in his sons’ academic accomplishments.

Matthew, 14, has a 4.0 grade point average and Steven, 16, has taken advanced placement college courses and maintains a 3.5 GPA.

“I want to take AP courses because it’s a challenge,” said Steven, who admits he is also interested in becoming a pilot.

“I didn’t like it at first,” said Steven, of his father monitoring the boys’ coursework. “I understand now. It’s all for a good cause.”



**Staff Sgt. Isaac Detrinidad (center) stands with his sons Matthew (left), 14, and Steven, 16, after receiving a \$2,500 scholarship check May 19 from the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association. Detrinidad is the staff noncommissioned officer of safety and hazardous materials at Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.**

Detrinidad’s passion for outer space and spacecraft began in 1980 when he witnessed a shuttle take off, and the images of space exploration stayed with him through his adult life.

In May 1998 he saw a Marine

Administrative Message regarding the astronaut candidate selection program, and he decided to begin taking college courses. At the time,

**see ISAAC,  
page 9**



# VMFA(AW)-121 out swings MAG-46

**Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin**  
*MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent*

Marines from Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 121 defeated Marines from Marine Aircraft Group 46 in the finals of the Winter League Intramural Golf Tournament May 8, at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Golf Course.

The two teams split their four representatives, into two teams each. An “A” team and a “B” team.

The match was played by the “A” teams leading off and playing the 18 holes with the “B” following. After the end of play by both teams, they added their scores together for a one final

score. After the 18 holes VMFA(AW)-121’s “A” team ended two holes under MAG-46’s “A” team giving them a two-stroke lead on their opponents. When the “B” teams finished off with VMFA(AW)-121 one stroke under that capped the win for the squadron.

Playing on the VMFA (AW)-121’s “A” team was Cpl. Brandon J. Wallace, ordnance technician, and Master Sgt. Joseph E. Brown, ordnance chief.

The “B” team consisted of Sgt. Timothy M. Anderson, intelligence chief, VMFA (AW)-121 and Master Sgt. Steve C. Shortill, aviation chief. “This was my last year that I’d be

playing on the team so I really wanted to strive for a good outcome,” said Anderson.

The plan was for me to putt first, to let Shortill read it if I missed. He would then have a better chance to make the putt. This worked out well, but I didn’t give him many chances to put, said Anderson, who has been playing golf since he was seven years old.

Anderson and Shortill seemed to be unstoppable as they both combined for nine long puts more than 20 feet, including, a long down-hill put for birdie on the 18th hole.

It came down to the last four holes. After losing the 15th hole, we came

back with birdies on 16 and 17 that put us up one for the round. The 18th was the biggest hole since team “A” for MAG-46 need a birdie to halve the match, said Wallace.

Both teams ended the hole with a par, making VMFA (AW)-121 the winners.

The Miramar Golf course holds these intramural tournaments each winter. Certain golfers that participate in league play will be invited to play in the tournament. The Semper Fit Center organizes all of the league play and wants more and more Marines to represent their squadron in their winter tournament.

**ISAAC,**  
**continued page 8**

Detrinidad said he knew some subjects weren’t going to be easy, but they were necessary steps to get him on a spacecraft.

“Math was never my strong subject,” said Detrinidad, jokingly.

Now, Detrinidad has a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and is currently a sophomore working toward his second B.S. in aerospace engineering. Additionally, Detrinidad has a 3.8 cumulative GPA, with a 4.0 GPA in mathematics and engineering.

Detrinidad’s scholastic drive and accomplishments influence more than just his sons. Cpl. Michael A. Pierson, hydraulics technician, MALS-11, used to work for Detrinidad and recalls the time when Detrinidad insisted he begin college.

In December 2005, while discussing post-holiday plans with each other, Detrinidad discovered Pierson, a native of Highland Village, Texas, wasn’t enrolled in college and had no immediate plans of attending one. Pierson said Detrinidad would constantly take him to the base education center until he finally signed up.

“I knew (Staff Sgt. Detrinidad) was one of two people selected for this award,” said Pierson. “It’s not surprising in the least. He’s all about his sons, his schoolwork and his job. It’s amazing to see how much you can get by working hard.”

Now guided by Detrinidad, Pierson is pursuing a B.S. in either civil or environmental engineering.

“My willingness and effort to help others succeed stems from my own experience: I distinctly recall failing several math and science classes while attending high school,” said Detrinidad. “By providing students what I lacked in my younger years, I help them overcome their adversities in complex subjects.

“Besides,” said Detrinidad, “ If I know something my classmates don’t, I tutor them. It helps me retain stuff.”



Cpl. Thomas D. Martinez, crew chief and weapons and tactics instructor with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), aims at a makeshift target on the desert outside of Al Asad, Iraq, May 16 during a test fire with the GAU-21 ramp-mounted weapon system.

# Sea Stallions implement new weapon

Story and Photos by  
Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

*3rd Marine Aircraft Wing*

AL ASAD, Iraq — Cruising over the desert just above 400 feet, a Marine crew chief kneels behind the Gun Ammunition Unit 21 mounted on the ramp of the CH-53D Sea Stallion. The pilots and crew chiefs in the front of the aircraft relay the current target's location that will be coming into his field of fire within seconds.

A series of smoke clouds and loud pops emit from the barrel of the .50-caliber machine gun, as a succession of tracer rounds slam into the makeshift targets of old vehicles on the desert dunes.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), is the first CH-53D helicopter squadron to install the GAU-21 .50-caliber machine gun system onto their aircraft.

"The GAU-21 is very similar to the XM-218 .50-caliber, which is the machine gun that is mounted on the doors of the aircraft," said Cpl. Thomas D. Martinez, crew chief and weapons and tactics instructor, HMH-463. "Most people can't really tell the difference until they know a little bit about them. It is a new system to the Marine Corps. The XM-218 has been around forever, but the GAU-21 is modified to fire faster and fire slightly farther."

Purchased in January 2004, the GAU-21 is fairly new to the Marine Corps. It was first tested on CH-53E Super Stallions before moving to the aircraft's little brother, the Delta.

"It was passed on to the Deltas and tested in Hawaii," said Martinez, a 22-year-old Durango, Colo., native. "We got the clearance to fire the tail gun from the Delta plat-

form in December last year. We chose to use the GAU-21 as the ramp system because of its ability to put more rounds down range. All we had to do was modify our ramp in order to facilitate it."

The GAU-21 was chosen over the XM-218 for its safer operability and the M-240G machine gun for the size and path of its rounds, said Cpl. Mitchell C. J. Harquail, crew chief and weapons and tactics instructor, HMH-463.

"The 7.62 round used in the M-240G is too small," said Harquail, a 26-year-old native of Sea Side, New Brunswick, Canada. "The rotor wash from the aircraft affects the rounds' trajectory. The .50-caliber is a heavier round. You need a heavy round with a higher volume."

However, between the added heat from the engines blowing through the rear of the aircraft and the added gravity from the aircraft turning or banking, this new weapon system takes a toll on the Marines who operate it.

"You have to shoot from the kneeling or squatting positions and hang off of the ramp of the aircraft sometimes. There is a lot more vibration and movement in the tail of the aircraft. It gets really hot back there, as well," said Harquail.

Although the GAU-21 can put a tremendous amount of physical stress on well-experienced crew chiefs, the importance of this weapon does not fade from their sight.

"We are normally engaged by the enemy from the rear of the aircraft," said Martinez, a Durango High School graduate. "These weapons are important because our window guns only give us coverage in less than a 180 degree angle in front. The tail gun provides 180 degrees of coverage behind and to the sides of the aircraft."

Another feature that the weapon system provides is safety, according to Harquail, who was the first designated tail gunner for the CH-53D platform with the GAU-21.

"It is more user friendly," said Harquail. "The likelihood of a cook-off, which is the igniting of a round caused by the heat of an extremely hot barrel, is greatly reduced because the weapon fires from an open bolt position."

With a rate of fire almost 400 rounds per minute faster than its older brother, the XM-218, the Marines who operate this weapon cannot get enough of it.

"I love it," Harquail said. "After the initial 20 rounds go down range, the dispersion goes down a lot. The weapon has a sweet spot that once you get used to it, you can hit almost anything."



Fifty-caliber rounds are taken from normal 100-round ammo cans, laid out flat and linked together before being put in the 300-round ammo can that the GAU-21 ramp-mounted weapon system shoots from.

[www.miramir.usmc.mil](http://www.miramir.usmc.mil)



Announcements



Is this your Eclipse?

The above vehicle has been marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. Abandoned vehicles at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar present security risks as well as environmental and safety concerns. PMS attempts to identify and contact vehicle owners of illegally parked, abandoned vehicles prior to tagging the vehicle with a Department of Defense notice. Vehicles are then scheduled for towing three days following the notice. For more information, call 577-1276/4139.

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information call 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:
Mitsubishi Eclipse	CA#5DAX061
Honda CX	CA#5ERW727
Suzuki GSXR	CA#17E7224
Ford E350	CA#4LNX778
Motorcycle Trailor	VA#CT497383

Miramar Movies

The Bob Hope Theater is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, call 577-4143 or log on to [www.mccsmiramar.com](http://www.mccsmiramar.com).

**Friday:**  
6:30 p.m. The Wild (G)  
9:00 p.m. Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector (PG-13)

**Saturday:**  
8:00 a.m. Swap Meet  
6:39 p.m. Scary Movie 4 (PG-13)  
9:00 p.m. Take the Lead (PG-13)

**Sunday:**  
1:00 p.m. \*Ice Age 2: The Meltdown (PG)  
6:30 p.m. \*ATL (PG-13)

**Wednesday:**  
6:30 p.m. Thank You for Smoking (R)

**Thursday:**  
2:00 p.m. Nanny McPhee (PG) FREE  
6:30 p.m. Scary Movie 4 (PG-13)

\* Indicates the last showing for that film.

HMH-466 Change of Command

Lt Col. John H. Celigoy will relinquish command as commanding officer for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, to Lt. Col. Koger J. McFadden during a change of command ceremony June 15 at 2 p.m. at Hangar 4.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

**Sunday:**  
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service  
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist  
**Wednesday:**  
7 p.m. Baptist service  
**Monday-Friday:**  
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass  
**Jewish:**  
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD  
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

San Diego County Fair

The San Diego County Fair is taking place at the Del Mar fair grounds from June 10 to July 4. Admission is free for service members and their families and \$9.10 for civilians.

For more information on the fair contact the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Entertainment Ticket Office at 577-4126.

Retirement Ceremony

After nearly 30 years of honorable service to our country, Col. Earl Wederbrook, manpower officer Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and a former commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 11, will be retiring during a ceremony June 9 at 3 p.m., at the air station parade field.

All interested personnel and their spouses are cordially invited to attend the ceremony.

Free Country Concert

Confederate Railroad will be performing at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Bob Hope Theater during a free concert June 20 at 7 p.m.

Doors open for uniformed military and families at 5:30 p.m., and for all other eligible persons at 6 p.m.

For more information call, 577-6365.